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Department of State

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TELEGRAM

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PAGE 01 KABUL 01269 201331Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PA-01 SSO-00 SS-15 NSCE-00
SP-02 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 INRE-00 SMS-01 /053 W
-----102886 201341Z /50

O R 201055Z FEB 79
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 2319
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USICA WASHDC

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FOR PA

E.O. 12065: N/A
TAGS: SOPN, ADEC, PEPR, AF, UR, US
SUBJECT: "NEW YORK TIMES" ARTICLE ABOUT ROLE OF SOVIET ADVISORS
IN AMBASSADOR DUBS' DEATH

REF: (A) STATE 0431321 (B) STATE 0431321 (C) STATE 0431311
(D) STATE 0421001 (E) KABUL 11961 (F) KABUL 1098

1. DURING HIS BRIEF STOPOVER IN KABUL, TRUMBULL INFORMED
EMBASSY OFFICERS THAT HIS NEWSPAPER'S EDITORS HAD INFORMED
HIM BY TELEPHONE (ON AN OPEN LINK BETWEEN NEW YORK AND KABUL)
THAT THEY WERE DOUBTFUL ABOUT THE CHARGES OF SOVIET INVOLVE-
MENT CONTAINED IN A SIX-PAGE DEPARTMENT OF STATE BRIEFING
PAPER, AND WERE TONING DOWN THE LANGUAGE IN THEIR STORY
(REFTEL E). WE DID NOT SEE THIS REFLECTED IN REFTEL D.

2. MINDFUL OF THE SERIOUS BILATERAL IMPLICATIONS INVOLVED
IN THIS PARTICULAR CONTROVERSY, THIS EMBASSY CONTINUES TO
BE VERY CAREFUL ABOUT WHAT IT SAYS TO THE PRESS, OTHER DIP-
LOMATS, AND AFGHAN OFFICIALS ABOUT SOVIET INVOLVEMENT IN THE
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PAGE 02

KABUL 01269 201331Z

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TRAGEDY. WE HAVE GENERALLY LIMITED OURSELVES TO THE LINE

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PRESENTED IN PARAGRAPH 2 OF REFTEL E.

3. RE TRUMBULL'S STORY (REFTEL A), HE WAS TOLD THAT A SOVIET ADVISOR AT THE HOTEL HAD REPEATEDLY ASSURED AMERICAN OFFICERS THAT HE AGREED THAT "TIME" WAS ON THE SIDE OF THE AUTHORITIES (PARAGRAPH 2). AS STATED IN PARAGRAPH 2 OF REFTEL E, TRUMBULL, WAS TOLD THAT WE DID NOT KNOW WHAT THE SOVIETS WERE SAYING TO THE AFGHANS (PARAGRAPH 3 AND 5 OF REFTEL A). (THE SOVIETS HELD THEIR CONVERSATIONS WITH THE AFGHANS BEHIND CLOSED DOORS, OR IN CORNERS OF THE LOBBY.) WE DO NOT KNOW HOW TRUMBULL REACHED THE CONCLUSION REPORTED IN PARAGRAPH 7.

4. WE SHOULD AT THIS TIME MAKE IT CLEAR THAT SIX REPEAT SIX USG OFFICIALS WERE PRESENT IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA WHERE SOVIET ADVISORS, SHORTLY BEFORE THE STORMING OF ROOM 117: (A) PROVIDED SPECIAL WEAPONRY TO AN AFGHAN POLICEMAN EN ROUTE TO JOIN THE ATTACK PARTY FURTHER DOWN THE HALLWAY IN FRONT OF ROOM 117; (B) APPEARED TO BE POSITIONING FORCES AT THE BANK-I-MILLI ACROSS THE STREET WITH HAND SIGNALS FROM A BALCONY NEAR ROOM 117; AND (C) GAVE HAND SIGNALS TO THOSE SAME FORCES AFTER THE ROOM WAS TAKEN IN ORDER TO TERMINATE THEIR FIRE. THE AMERICANS NOTED THE SOVIET OFFICERS' ACTIVITIES, AND COMMENTED TO EACH OTHER ABOUT THEM. AS NOTED IN PARAGRAPHS 25 AND 32 OF REFTEL E, THE SOVIETS HAD BEEN REMAINING IN THE BACKGROUND UNTIL IT BECAME CLEAR THAT THE AFGHANS HAD RECEIVED THEIR ORDERS TO STRIKE. IT WAS OUR IMPRESSION THAT THE SOVIETS THEN DECIDED TO CARRY OUT THEIR PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY DUTIES.

5. AS REPORTED IN PARAGRAPH 24 OF REFTEL F, THE USG OFFICERS AT THE HOTEL WERE OF THE OPINION THAT THE DECISIONS WERE BEING MADE AT A HIGHER LEVEL ELSEWHERE IN THE CITY. AMONG
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PAGE 03 KABL 01269 2013312

THOSE HIGHER-LEVEL DECISION MAKERS MIGHT HAVE BEEN POLICE COMMANDANT SAYED DAQUD TAROON. AN EMBASSY OFFICER WHO HAD BEEN KEPT WAITING OUTSIDE TAROON'S OFFICE DURING THE CRITICAL STAGES OF THE INCIDENT, SAW A RUSSIAN CIVILIAN LEAVE TAROON'S OFFICE SHORTLY AFTER 1255.

6. IN A SEPTTEL THE EMBASSY HAS REQUESTED THE DEPARTMENT'S GUIDANCE ON HOW TO HANDLE THE GROWING DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN THE OFFICIAL STATEMENTS OF THE SOVIET AND AFGHAN GOVERNMENTS AND WHAT USG EYEWITNESSES KNOW THE TRUTH TO BE. ANY SUGGESTION

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OF EQUIVOCATION OR "COVERUP" IS DEMORALIZING TO THE OFFICIAL AMERICAN COMMUNITY -- AND IS BECOMING RATHER POINTLESS AT ANY RATE. ALMOST ALL THE FACTS OF THE INCIDENT ARE SPREADING THROUGHOUT KABUL. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT SOME DISAFFECTED AFGHAN SOURCES (E.G., POLICEMEN WHO TOOK PART IN THE OPERATION) ARE INVOLVED IN THIS DISSEMINATION.
AMSTUTZ

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